

WildSafeBC Annual Report 2017

Rossland and Trail

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Ministry of
Environment

Executive Summary

This was the second year for WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) Desiree Profili. The WildSafeBC Rossland – Trail program began on May 1st and experienced a busy start to the season with the WCC in high demand to attend events and respond to wildlife conflict reports. The 2017 program included an increase in attendance in public displays, community events, educational sessions, and an increased social media campaign.

Continued logistical support from the local Conservation Officers Service (COS), bylaws officers and the local media made this year's program delivery more focused and gave it a broader reach.

This report includes an overview on WildSafeBC initiatives, as well as reflection on the year's challenges and the future plans for the Rossland – Trail program.

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Highlights from the 2017 Season

Local Events and Public Displays

The WildSafeBC Rossland - Trail program experienced an increase in requests to attend events in 2017, which may be attributed to an increase in public awareness of the program and the relationships established by WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) Desiree Profili. The diversity of events attended this season created opportunities to reach a large and diverse audience within the community. A total of 12 events were attended during the 2017 season including:

- Trail Silver City Days
- Canada Day - Rossland Mining Museum
- A Night at the Museum - Rossland
- Rossland Golden City Days
- Rossland Fall Fair
- Fruit Pick and Press - Rossland
- The Teddy Bear Picnic -Trail
- Canada Day - Beaver Creek Park in Trail
- Terry Fox Run - Trail
- Rivers Day Clean Up - Trail
- Spooktacular - Trail
- Movie Night - Save the Caribou



Figure 1. Trail Silver City Days event



Figure 2. Teddy Bear Picnic in Gyro Park, June 2017



Figure 3. Spooktacular event in Trail

Educational Sessions

This year the WCC worked with the Rossland Sustainability Commission on increasing awareness around proper compost management in an effort to reduce wildlife attractants. The WCC participated in a Community Garden Walk to deliver information regarding “wildlife proofing” home compost. This included information on plans for a locally developed stone compost, as well as tips on how to keep compost working properly and reduce smells. Additionally, the event included an electric fence demonstration by the WCC to demonstrate how to protect compost and other backyard wildlife attractants. The WCC actively promoted this event on the WildSafeBC Rossland - Trail Facebook page to encourage support and participation.

An additional electric fence demonstration workshop was undertaken at the Rossland Museum, which was a joint presentation by the WCC and the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund’s (HCTF) Grizzly Bear Coexistence Solutions project. The workshop was focussed on the use of electric fencing to protect backyard chickens, beehives and compost. The event was attended by around 12 participants.



Figure 4. Electric fencing workshop, July 2017

Two hands-on bear spray demonstrations and training sessions were delivered by the WCC using inert bear spray at the Rossland Museum and the Lions Club Campground during the 2017 season. These events have proved popular in the Rossland and Trail communities and will be continued in the 2018 season.

Providing education to children was a large component of the 2017 program. This included delivering the WildSafeBC Junior Ranger Program at four different schools to 15 individual classes ranging from preschool to Grade 6. The Junior Ranger Program was also presented throughout the summer to Camp Cowabunga in Trail, the Rossland Museum Summer Camp and the Trail Library Summer Reading Program.

Media and Social Media

The local media was very supportive of the 2017 WildSafeBC program. The Trail Daily Times ran numerous articles using WildSafeBC’s messaging around managing wildlife attractants, as well as promoting the various events that were hosted by the WCC. The two local radio stations, The GOAT and EZ Rock Kootenays hosted multiple interviews over the summer with the WCC and were an effective tool in reaching a large audience to promote attractant management and encourage a reduction in human-wildlife conflict. Figure 5 presents the published interview of the WCC by EZ Rock Kootenays.



Figure 5. EZ Rock interview published online November, 2017

The WCC utilised the WildSafeBC Rossland - Trail Facebook page again this season to promote events, provide alerts regarding wildlife conflict experiencing in the communities, and to promote attractant management messaging. The WCC created over 20 Facebook posts that reached over 3,000 people and one post in particular regarding a large male grizzly in the Taranac community reached over 14,000 people. The WCC grew the number of likes on the Facebook page from around 350 to over 500 (Figure 6).

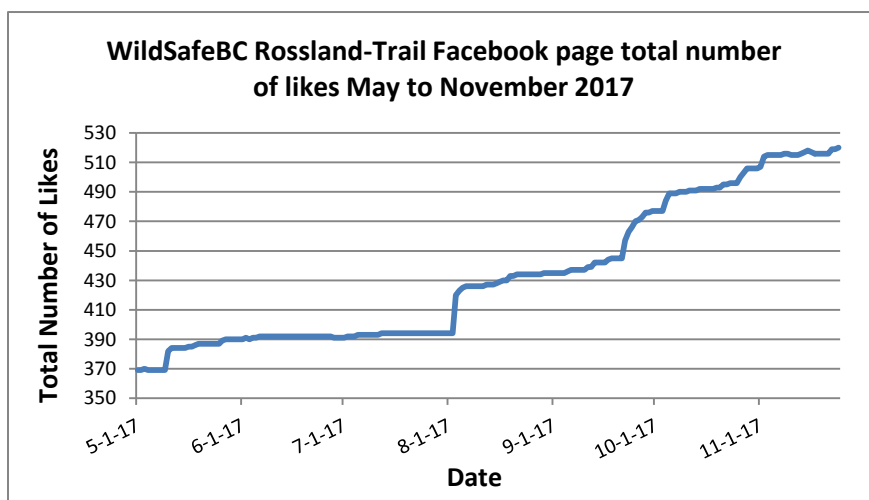


Figure 6. WildSafeBC Rossland-Trail Facebook page likes statistics 2017

Door-to-door and Garbage Tagging

Both door-to-door canvassing and garbage tagging were undertaken in areas of high wildlife conflict during the 2017 season. The WCC was directed by the Conservation Officer Service (COS) of city bylaw officers to target particular neighbourhoods following reports of wildlife activity or conflict. The WCC also visited areas and neighbourhoods that were the focus of previous years door-to-door and garbage tagging efforts to ensure residents were reminded of attractant management strategies.

The “Bear in Area” signs were commonly required, especially in areas where grizzly bears were sighted within the communities. The COS made several requests for signs to be installed when attempting to relocate a male grizzly during the summer. A need was identified for the development of a “Cougar in Area” sign and a “Coyote in Area” sign as these predators occur commonly in the Rossland and Trail communities (Figure 7).

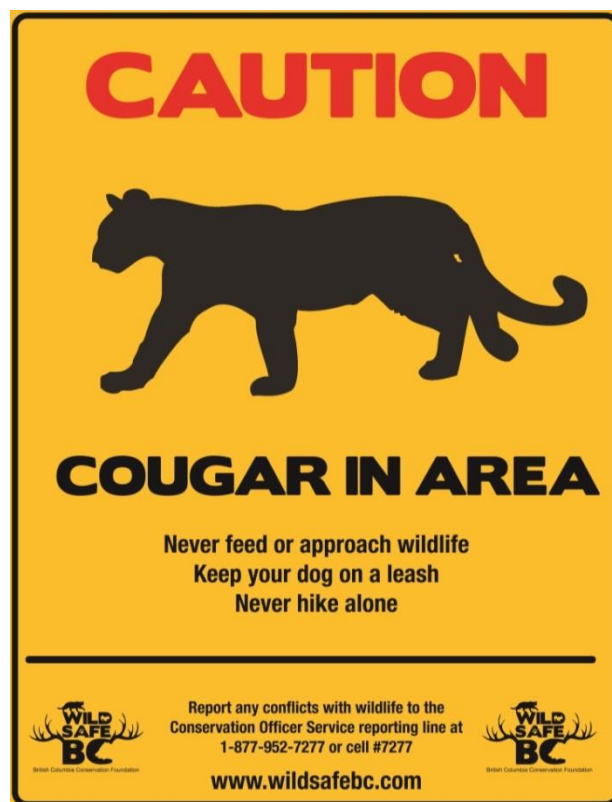


Figure 7. Cougar in area sign

BC Goes Wild Weekend

The WCC helped celebrate the second annual BC Goes Wild Weekend on the third weekend in September by presenting a bear spray demonstration at the Lions Club Campground in Rossland which was attended by six people on the 16th of September. The WCC attended a Pick and Press event in Rossland on the 17th of September in Rossland which was run by the Sustainability Commission and encouraged people to harvest their fruit and use the community press to make juice.

Fruit Gleaning

There was a large fruit crop in both communities this season with approximately 600 pounds of apples and plums picked and donated to local charities (Figure 8). The WCC partnered with the Rossland Sustainability Commission and local fruit gleaning efforts to promote attractant reduction practices. One of the challenges this season was the overabundance of unmaintained fruit trees and vines, making some gleaning efforts unsafe for volunteers.



Figure 8. Plums picked by gleaning volunteers

Challenges from the 2017 Season

One of the biggest challenges for the 2017 season was the loss of the community fruit picking organiser Sita Lawson who led previous year's fruit gleaning efforts. This year produced a large crop for most domestic fruits and there was a high demand for assistance in picking the fruit. The WCC worked closely with local volunteers to build networks for promoting wildlife life attractant reduction practices however this has been easier to achieve in previous years when a community fruit picking organiser was in place.

Garbage management continued to be problematic in both communities. The Trail City Council included garbage management bylaws as an agenda item for consideration during 2017. The WCC will continue to encourage improved garbage management bylaws and procedures in both communities to reduce the amount of garbage left accessible on non-pick up days.

The WCC has found challenges in the coverage of the WildSafeBC Rossland and Trail program, as it currently excludes the communities of Warfield and Fruitvale. This creates gaps in the program delivery and makes it difficult for the WCC to respond to wildlife conflict incidents.

The current length of the WildSafeBC Rossland - Trail program is from May 1st to November 30th. The WCC started receiving requests to attend educational events and respond to wildlife conflict in early April. Towards the end of the 2017 the WCC has experienced a high rate of phone call and WARP alerts about coyote, cougars and raccoons which have not been

responded to. An extension of the program dates to include hours for the spring and winter shoulders would be helpful to address the concerns from the community.

Goals for 2018

WildSafeBC Rossland - Trail is looking forward to strengthening existing partnerships, as well as working towards reducing human-wildlife conflict in 2018. The list below provides detail of our goals for the 2018 season:

- Work with City of Trail to include garbage management and storage considerations in bylaws
- Work with both Rossland and Trail to become Bear Smart communities
- Work towards getting Warfield and Fruitvale to contribute to the WildSafeBC program
- Continue to liaise with COS and bylaw officers to focus door-to-door canvassing and garbage tagging on high priority areas
- Increase the attendance to summer markets
- Work towards developing a pruning workshop to encourage proper fruit trees maintenance and to reduce the volume of unpicked fruit

Acknowledgements

WildSafeBC Rossland - Trail is grateful for all the funding support received from the City of Rossland, the City of Trail, the Columbia Basin Trust and the Department of Environment. As well as local support from the staff and councils in both the Rossland and Trail, the Conservation Officers Service in Nelson including local CO's Ben Beetlestone, Blair Thin and Logan Proux and Jason Hawkes, the local media EZ Rock, The Goat and the Trail Daily Times. Without their continued support the program would not be successful in working towards its goals of Keeping Wildlife Wild and Communities Safe!



British Columbia Conservation Foundation